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Tuesday, October 16, 2018

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1 – Reactor raised from University of Arkansas site, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 10/15/18
https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2018/oct/16/reactor-raised-from-university-of-arkan/
Cleanup of a former nuclear test site in rural Washington County continued Monday with the lifting and placement of the site's reactor core into a special containment vessel, said project manager Dean Wheeler.

2 - Craft-Turney water customers say meeting did not go as expected, KLTV, 10/15/18
https://www.kltv.com/2018/10/16/craft-turney-water-customers-say-meeting-did-not-go-expected/
A public meeting was held tonight for Craft-Turney water customers. Almost two weeks agoS, Craft-Turney issued a 'do not use' warning for customers near Jacksonville. Part of that order was rescinded Friday. everal concerns were discussed in this public meeting.

3 - Wildcatters hunt for gas leaks and hope for riches, E&E News, 10/16/18
https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060102601
Two Cessna planes will start making passes over 33,000 oil and gas wells in southeast New Mexico later this month. It's part of a new business plan, and its creators hope to strike it rich by revealing invisible plumes of methane. It will be Silicon Valley exploring the Oil Patch.

4 – EPA faces suit for failing to act on SO2 noncompliance, E&E News, 10/15/18
https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/2018/10/15/stories/1060102593
Environmental groups threatened a lawsuit today over EPA's alleged failure to act on state cleanup plans for a dozen areas that aren't complying with the 2010 Clean Air Act standard for sulfur dioxide.

5 - 'Hyperalarming' study shows massive insect loss, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 10/15/18
https://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2018/10/insect_loss_climate_change.html#incart_river_index
Insects around the world are in a crisis, according to a small but growing number of long-term studies showing dramatic declines in invertebrate populations. A new report suggests that the problem is more widespread than scientists realized.

6 – How DC unleashed fossil-fuel exports despite climate worries, San Antonio Express-News, 10/15/18
https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/politics/article/How-DC-unleashed-fossil-fuel-exports-despite-13310337.php
Long undervalued, natural gas was once burned off indiscriminately as an unwanted byproduct of oil drilling. But the fuel's fortunes have changed.

7 – Scientists to Trump: 'Zero Reason' to Expect a Climate Reversal, Bloomberg, 10/15/18
https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-10-15/trump-says-climate-change-no-hoax-but-will-change-back-again
Donald Trump may not think climate change is a "hoax" anymore, but the president made clear he still doubts whether humans are driving the phenomenon and thinks the whole thing could reverse itself.

8 – How Dallas fared against suburbs like Plano, Arlington in a ranking of America's greenest cities, Dallas Morning News, 10/15/18

https://www.dallasnews.com/news/environment/2018/10/16/dallas-fared-suburbs-like-plano-arlington-ranking-americas-greenest-cities

The Dallas-Fort Worth area often tops — or at least performs well — in the flood of financial and quality-of-life lists released every month. But cities here and throughout Texas tanked in Wallet Hub's 2018 Greenest Cities in America list.

9 – DOJ seeks to limit scientists' testimony at climate trial, E&E News, 10/16/18

https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1060102631

The Trump administration doesn't want the trial in a landmark lawsuit brought by a group of young Americans to become a climate change symposium.

10 - High and dry: Drought persists while rivers flow high with waters from the West, Kansas, Tulsa World, 10/15/18

https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/high-and-dry-drought-persists-while-rivers-flow-high-with/article_65f190f7-c4e0-54b9-94be-b2e1aa518a72.html

It's almost a cruel joke. As water builds up in Keystone and Oologah lakes, and flows high in the Arkansas and Verdigris rivers, much of the land surrounding those waterways remains in moderate to severe drought conditions.

Reactor raised from University of Arkansas site

Today at 1:00 a.m.

Courtesy Photo/ENERGY SOLUTIONS Workers on Monday used a mechanical lift to raise the reactor core at the Southwest Experimental Fast Oxide Reactor nuclear test site in Washington County and place the reactor core into a containment vessel. The vessel will later be sealed and driven across the country to a waste disposal area in Nevada. Utah-based Energy Solutions is overseeing cleanup of the site for its owner, the University of Arkansas.

FAYETTEVILLE -- Cleanup of a former nuclear test site in rural Washington County continued Monday with the lifting and placement of the site's reactor core into a special containment vessel, said project manager Dean Wheeler.

Work remains to be done before it can be trucked across the country to a Nevada disposal site, but the effort marks a major step in removing the radioactive heart of a site that languished unused for decades.

The Southwest Experimental Fast Oxide Reactor site, about 20 miles southwest of Fayetteville, was built in the late 1960s with funding from the Atomic Energy Commission and operated by a group of investor-owned utilities, according to the University of Arkansas, site owner.

It never was hooked up to the equipment necessary to generate electricity. The 20-megawatt reactor ceased operations in the early 1970s. UA took ownership in 1975 for research purposes, but by 1986 the site had fallen out of use.

A $10.5 million U.S. Department of Energy grant announced in October 2016 jump-started cleanup work.

But, until earlier this year, money to finish the job remained uncertain for a project estimated by UA to cost $26.1 million. In April, federal lawmakers Sen. John Boozman and Rep. Steve Womack announced an additional $10 million in to complete the federal cleanup.

Wheeler oversees the project for Utah-based Energy Solutions. He said workers used a lift on Monday morning to raise the 84,000-pound reactor core, then placed it into a 20-foot-tall, carbon steel containment vessel shaped "like a big soup can."

He said a total of about 25 workers, including from Barnhart Crane & Rigging and also demolition contractor Brandenburg, were on site for the lift Monday. Another dozen or so observers, including from the state Department of Health, were also on hand, Wheeler said.

"It went very well. No issues," Wheeler said.

The reactor core's radioactivity could be measured at about 5 rems per hour, about 500 times more than what is measured from a typical X-ray, Wheeler said. Work will continue into next month to fill the container with grout and weld it shut in preparation from a two-week long transport by "large, heavy haul" truck to the Nevada National Security Site, Wheeler said.

Additional work at the Washington County site includes removal of reflectors and shielding that must be packaged for proper disposal, Wheeler said. A work timeline presented at a community meeting last month had the decommissioning project set for completion in May of next year.

NW News on 10/16/2018

Print Headline: Reactor raised from university site

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University of Arkansas, Washington county, Nevada, NW News

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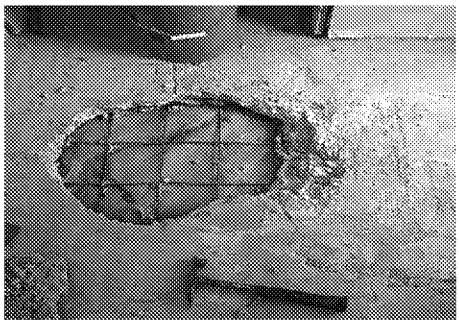

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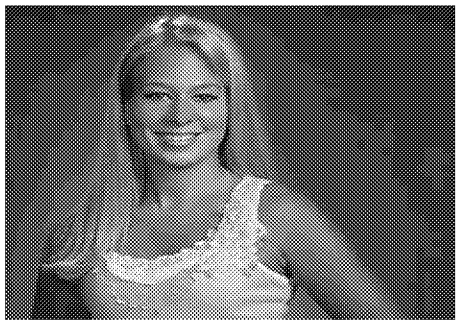

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Craft-Turney water customers say meeting did not go as expected

Video: Craft-Turney water customers say meeting did not go as expected

By Brenna Burger | October 15, 2018 at 10:08 PM CDT - Updated October 15 at 11:01 PM

JACKSONVILLE, TX (KLTV) - A public meeting was held tonight for Craft-Turney water customers.

Almost two weeks ago, Craft-Turney issued a 'do not use' warning for customers near Jacksonville. Part of that order was rescinded Friday.

Several concerns were discussed in this public meeting. "My wife is pregnant, and she's been ingesting this stuff. What is going to happen to my baby in the future?"

A room filled with disgruntled Craft-Turney customers, who just wanted answers. "We had to find out through the grapevine and that is not fair to the people you call customers."

People stood up and voiced their concern for their health, their money, and their homes. And most believe they deserved to know everything about the investigation. "Tell us, drink the water we have been drinking, bathe in

the water we have bathed in."

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality identified the fungicide found in the water system as NexGen; a chemical commonly used as a pesticide.

"Everyone at Craft-Turney, TCEQ, EPA want to get to the bottom of this for sure, and what to see that whoever is responsible is held accountable but at this point, is too premature to say," Craft-Turney board president John Hawkins says.

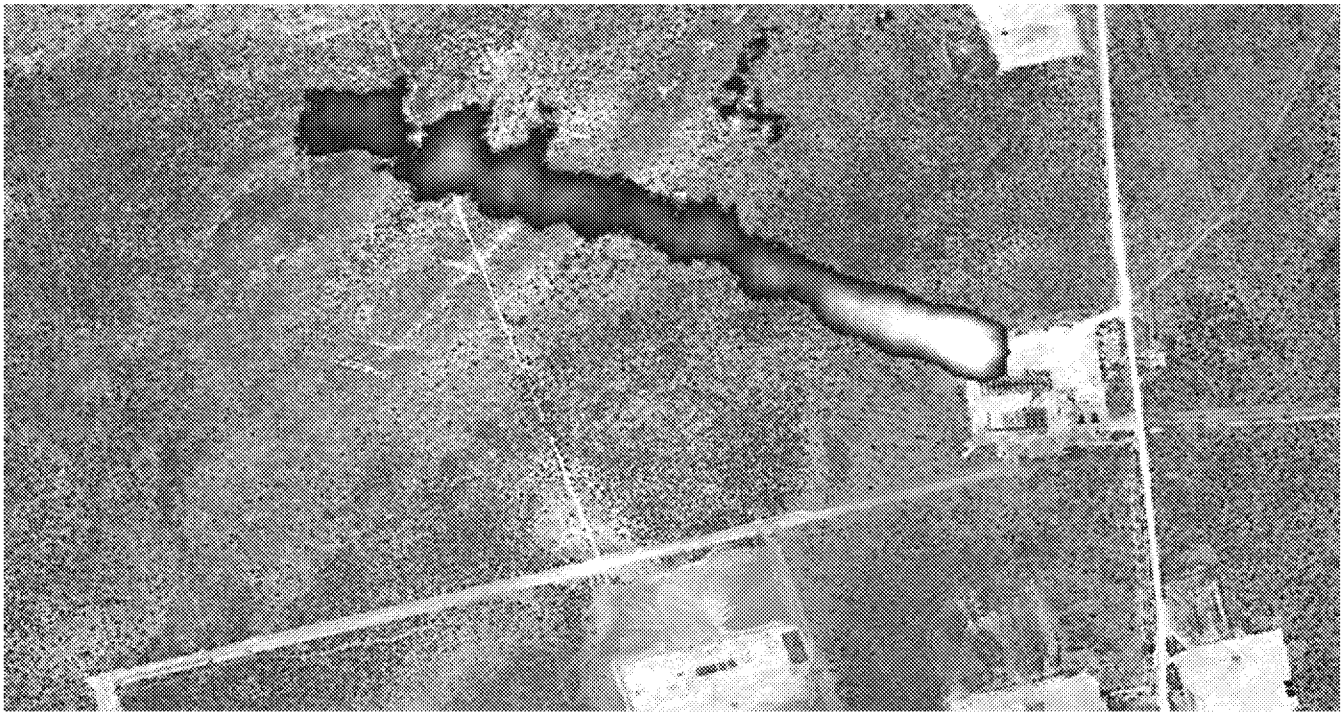
And when asked about the origin of the chemical... "We cannot pinpoint the truth because the investigation is not complete," Hawkins says.

TCEQ says they have taken 175 samples and done 140 field tests in the contaminated area. The investigation is still ongoing. TCEQ says there are still eleven lines that are contaminated, no word yet on when the investigation will reach a conclusion.

EMISSIONS

Wildcatters hunt for gas leaks and hope for riches

John Fialka, E&E News reporter • Published: Tuesday, October 16, 2018



A methane detector used by Kairos Aerospace sees a plume of gas leaking from an oil and gas well. Kairos Aerospace

Two Cessna planes will start making passes over 33,000 oil and gas wells in southeast New Mexico later this month. It's part of a new business plan, and its creators hope to strike it rich by revealing invisible plumes of methane.

It will be Silicon Valley exploring the Oil Patch.

Kairos Aerospace from Mountain View, Calif., will strap a patented backpack-sized device it calls a "Leak Surveyor" onto the wing struts of the planes and connect it with software that can see and then pinpoint methane. The plumes are one of Earth's most troublesome global warming gases.

"This isn't research, it's wildcatting," remarked Steven Deiker, a co-founder of the company. He was referring to the nickname for prospectors who made their fortunes discovering fossil fuel formations. Deiker, an astrophysicist, sees his fortune hanging in the air.

Although the process is complex, Deiker's business plan is starkly simple. For a fee, Kairos will send reports to the owners of the wells, pipelines and storage tanks, who, he expects, will promptly fix the leaks because they are expensive. "Our argument to almost everyone is that if you use us, you'll make more money," he explained.

And so will Kairos, he expects.

Its system was tested over a 100-square-mile section in Texas earlier this year. Then it was expanded to 1,000 square miles this summer. The company now has customers in Texas, California and Alberta. The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), a supporter of new methane-hunting research, estimates that New Mexico could be losing as much as $244 million worth of natural gas every year. Methane makes up about 95 percent of natural gas.

Major oil companies have already invested in the idea. Kairos recently received $6 million from two oil-related groups, the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative and Energy Innovation Capital. And scientists have been impressed by the company's results.

Eric Kort, an assistant professor of climate and space science at the University of Michigan, was among the group that first quantified New Mexico's chronic leakage problems in a 2015 survey sponsored by NASA. He noted that methane is between 24 and 32 times more potent in terms of warming than carbon dioxide.

Methane hangs around in the air for about 20 years, when it can break down into other greenhouse gases like CO2, which can linger in the atmosphere for centuries. Getting leaked methane out of the air will help companies and nations jump-start the overall process of cutting their emissions.

"We really shouldn't want to lose it," Kort explained. Because methane has inherent value, it gives companies a powerful incentive to stop leaks.

Deiker says his approach avoids a "long battle" by not bringing government regulators into a case. He noted that a recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said that governments have to begin reducing greenhouse gases within the next decade to avoid more severe and lasting climate damage. "We don't have time for a long battle."

His company's goal is to lower methane emissions "in a way that will be adopted eagerly by the oil and gas industry."

Studies that Kort and other scientists have participated in have found that most methane leaks in oil and gas fields are small, but the top 10 percent of emitters experience between 49 and 66 percent of the losses.

Kairos' technology is aimed at finding the "super-emitters." These sources can leak 50,000 cubic feet of methane per year. Stopping those, he said, can save companies $30,000 a year, "and some of them are quite a bit larger than that." He showed pictures of large gas plumes billowing from gas wells or pipeline systems.

The pictures were taken by special cameras and gas spectrometers that identify the peculiar signatures of methane molecules. Greenhouse gases trap solar heat that otherwise would bounce back into space. When methane molecules are struck by reflected infrared solar radiation from the Earth, they move in certain ways that allow software programs to identify them.

Scientists have been spotting large natural gas plumes hanging over New Mexico's oil and gas fields since 2003. In 2014, NASA scientists found a 2,500-square-mile cloud of methane floating over the Four Corners region in northern New Mexico. At the time, it was the largest concentration of methane found anywhere in the nation.

But finding precise sources of leaks after wind has mixed them in the atmosphere has been a challenge until recent software developments. They can winnow out the "noise" of smaller leaks and use GPS to locate the biggest plumes.

Deiker and his company's co-founder, Brian Jones, previously designed space satellites for Lockheed Martin Corp., and their knowledge of the oil business was minimal until 2014, when they put together their methane detection system. They learned that the traditional method used by oil and gas companies was to train inspectors to visit each well and use hand-held infrared cameras to search for leaks.

"One of the fields we did early on had 1,500 wells, and we asked them if we did it using trucks, how long would that take. They said somewhere between six months and a year. We did that in a day, so that became part of our argument about how this would reduce their costs," recalled Deiker. "We decided to design something as cheaply as possible to scan as large an area as possible. That's a very different thing from what most people are doing."

The Cessnas, which are rented for between $200 and $300 an hour, fly what Kairos calls "lawn mower patterns," making parallel straight passes over oil and gas fields at 3,000 feet until they've covered each well area several times.

In earlier surveys, scientists found some natural sources of methane in plumes floating over New Mexico, including gases seeping from underground coal seams. Kenley McQueen, then acting secretary of New Mexico's Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, asserted that they were the main cause of the cloud. "My personal opinion is that the methane hot spot in the San Juan-Four Corners area has existed for at least the last 10 million years," he told reporters.

Kort and other scientists said the evidence showed most of the methane was coming from oil and gas fields. "I would consider that to be a political debate and not a scientific debate," Kort said of McQueen's opinion. "If you calculate what the emissions are now in the atmosphere in that region, there would not be any gas left if they were leaking for millions of years."

McQueen, a former executive for a company that was drilling gas wells in the area, was promoted last year to become secretary of New Mexico's regulatory efforts by Gov. Susana Martinez, a Republican. Now, methane will be a feature of next month's race to replace Martinez, who is term-limited.

The race includes two lawmakers from New Mexico. Rep. Steve Pearce, a Republican, is opposed to stronger methane rules. Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham, a Democrat, says stronger rules will create jobs and increase state tax revenues to support schools. Polls show growing enthusiasm for tougher state controls, even as the Trump administration works to weaken federal rules limiting emissions.

Jon Goldstein, director of regulatory and legislative affairs at EDF, which is helping to finance new tests for detecting methane, predicts that political arguments for limiting leaks will get stronger, because major oil companies such as BP PLC and Exxon Mobil Corp. have joined international efforts to reduce methane emissions. "The oil and gas industry is not a monolith," Goldstein said.

Meanwhile, Kairos Aerospace might not be the lone wildcatter patrolling the skies over the Oil Patch for long. EDF and Stanford University recently tested 12 technologies from different companies that promise to detect methane cheaply, using aircraft, drones, truck-mounted devices and stationary leak detectors. The program is supported by Exxon Mobil; Schlumberger Ltd., a global oil field supply company; Royal Dutch Shell PLC; and the American Petroleum Institute, among others.

Arvind P. Ravikumar, an engineer with Stanford, says 24 companies presented new methane detection devices, and the winners will be announced shortly.

The "cool thing" about the methane problem, he explained, is that new and relatively inexpensive technology compared with satellites "can see super-emitters."

AIR POLLUTION

EPA faces suit for failing to act on SO2 noncompliance

Sean Reilly, E&E News reporter

Published: Monday, October 15, 2018

Mill Creek Generating Station in Kentucky. Louisville Gas and Electric

Environmental groups threatened a lawsuit today over EPA's alleged failure to act on state cleanup plans for a dozen areas that aren't complying with the 2010 Clean Air Act standard for sulfur dioxide.

"Timely implementation" of that standard "is critical," Robert Ukeiley, an attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity and two other groups, said in a **letter** to acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler serving notice that the suit could be filed in 60 days.

In eight instances, EPA has passed a statutory deadline for taking final action on state plan submittals turned in more than a year ago, the letter alleges. In four others, agency officials similarly haven't issued a required "finding of failure" for states that are behind schedule in submitting complete plans, it says.

The nonattainment areas in question are in Arizona, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

The Trump administration "has ignored those deadlines for protecting the public and is instead turning a blind eye to corporate polluters," Sierra Club attorney Zachary Fabish said in a news release. Also signing on to the letter was the California-based Center for Environmental Health.

EPA press aides did not immediately reply to an emailed request for comment this afternoon.

Sulfur dioxide is among a half-dozen "criteria" pollutants named in the Clean Air Act for which EPA is supposed to review and, if needed, update air quality standards every five years. The biggest sources of SO2 emissions are coal-fired power plants and other industrial facilities.

Short-term exposure is linked to breathing difficulties, with children and the elderly particularly vulnerable. SO2 also contributes to the formation of acid rain and fine particulates.

The 2010 hourly standard, based on a three-year average, is 75 parts per billion. This spring, following a fresh review, EPA proposed to leave that standard unchanged (***Greenwire***, May 29). Under a court-ordered timetable, the agency must make a final decision by next January.

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How DC unleashed fossil-fuel exports despite climate worries

Updated 7:35 am CDT, Tuesday, October 16, 2018

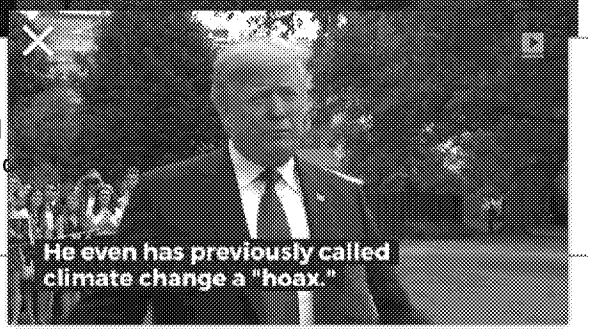

IMAGE 1 OF 4

FILE - In this Oct. 22, 2015, file photo, workers tend to oil
Watford City, N.D. Since Donald Trump took office, Americ
... more

WASHINGTON (AP) — Energy Secretary Rick Perry's keynote speech at the World Gas Conference in June opened with a marching band and ended with an exhibition by the Harlem Globetrotters. It was a spectacle befitting the industry symposium. "We're sharing our energy bounty with the world," Perry gushed from a stage at the Washington Convention Center.

Long undervalued, natural gas was once burned off indiscriminately as an unwanted byproduct of oil drilling. But the fuel's fortunes have changed. Cooled to minus 162 degrees Celsius, natural gas condenses into a liquid marketed as a clean alternative to coal. In just three years, the U.S. has emerged as a top producer of liquefied natural gas, or LNG, selling shiploads of the commodity to countries such as China, which are seeking low-carbon energy sources to combat climate change.

Natural gas, it turns out, isn't so great for the climate, but that hasn't stopped America from sending its fossil fuels abroad. Since Donald Trump took office in 2017, exports of LNG and crude oil have surged, rivaling the likes of Saudi Arabia and Russia. To achieve what it calls "energy dominance," the Trump administration has taken its cues from an unlikely source: its predecessor.

When Perry hawked LNG and coal to India in April, he was advancing a dialogue the Department of Energy began under Barack Obama in 2014. Leaked administration plans for a "central institution" to promote "clean and advanced fossil fuels" abroad could combine several Obama-era initiatives.

Compared to Trump, Obama is regarded as an environmental champion. But history paints a more complicated picture. As the young senator promised "change we can believe in" during the 2008 presidential campaign, change was also sweeping American oilfields. Advances in hydraulic fracturing, or fracking — a way of recovering oil and gas from tight rock called shale — created a glut. Industry responded by pitching fossil-fuel exports as a "win-win" that would benefit consumers and enhance American power. Helping to deliver the message was a coalition of White House advisers: academics such as Columbia University's Jason Bordoff, energy gurus such as Daniel Yergin, and national-security experts such as John Deutch — all with links to firms profiting from the boom.

Leading the charge within government was then-Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, a nuclear physicist with longstanding ties to the oil and gas industry and an enthusiastic proponent of natural gas. Under his watch, the Energy Department moved swiftly to foster LNG exports in 2013 before shifting its focus to decades-old restrictions on the export of crude oil. Days after the Paris climate agreement was reached in 2015, Obama signed a budget bill to keep the federal government running; slipped inside was a provision allowing crude oil to be sold freely for the first time since 1975. The move was praised by an alliance of 16 companies, most of which are now capitalizing on an export-driven boom in the Permian Basin of Texas and New Mexico.

What's good for corporate profits, however, may not be good for the planet. A growing body of research suggests natural gas isn't the climate panacea many promised it would be, with mounting concerns over its main component: methane, a greenhouse gas roughly 86 times more potent in the short term than carbon dioxide. In the race for energy supremacy, the U.S. has become not only the world's largest natural-gas producer but also a top exporter of oil — a fuel that remains among the most harmful for the climate and public health. As energy exports climb, so too does global consumption of fossil fuels, drawing billions in infrastructure investment that — some argue — tilts the world away from renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar.

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This story is part of a collaboration between the Center for Public Integrity, the Texas Tribune, The Associated Press and Newsy.

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'ALL OF THE ABOVE'

As Obama's energy czar, Moniz spearheaded the administration's "all-of-the-above" policy, which endorsed drilling alongside renewable energy. When he became secretary in 2013, among his top priorities was fast-tracking approvals for natural-gas exports — as advocated by industry lobbying groups such as the American Petroleum Institute.

The Trump White House has taken the idea a step further. In August, the Energy Department announced it would automatically approve small-volume exports of LNG. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, a booster of increased drilling on federal lands and offshore, has called America's energy supremacy a moral imperative.

Moniz, now in the private sector, has continued to follow an "all-of-the-above" approach. His Washington office houses his nonprofit think tank, Energy Futures Initiatives, and his for-profit firm, EJM Associates LLC. The two organizations were launched on the same day last year. EJM receives staff and administrative support from EFI. Both share an office with The Scowcroft Group, a consultancy founded by former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft that specializes in emerging markets like China and whose clients include oil and gas companies.

Scowcroft and Moniz aren't just office mates. According to their websites, their for-profit firms are engaged in a three-way partnership with McLarty Associates, a trade consultancy located in the same building. A press release describes EJM as a strategic energy advisor for McLarty Associates clients.

Headed by Thomas F. "Mack" McLarty III, a Clinton White House official and former natural-gas executive, the firm has represented LNG investors Chevron and General Electric. McLarty's lobbying division has advocated for Shell on natural-gas matters and a company behind a pipeline with ties to the Kremlin. Brent Scowcroft and Mack McLarty sit on EFI's advisory board.

During a recent interview with the Center for Public Integrity and Newsy, Moniz balked at the suggestion that his ties to the fossil-fuel industry could pose a conflict of interest. He emphasized his climate credentials, saying, "I have been a champion of renewables for a long, long time."

Responding to follow-up questions, a spokesman wrote in a seven-page statement that Moniz "has no financial relationships with oil and gas producers," and that neither EFI nor EJM engages in "lobbying activities or foreign government representation." It also said, "EJM has had no discussions with McLarty on LNG export issues," but did not include a similar qualification for The Scowcroft Group. "To date, there are no joint projects with either (Scowcroft or McLarty)," the statement added.

Representatives of Scowcroft and McLarty declined to comment.

Moniz's oil-and-gas ties go back years. When named energy secretary, he terminated his work as a paid consultant for companies such as BP. At MIT, Moniz ran a think tank, largely funded by the oil and gas industry, which published one of the earliest and most influential reports on natural gas. First publicized in interim form in June 2010, it affirmed the fuel as a "bridge" to ease the country's transition from coal.

The study's major sponsor was the American Clean Skies Foundation, a group created by Aubrey McClendon — then CEO of Chesapeake Energy — as part of a multimillion-dollar effort to market natural gas as a climate solution. Moniz and several co-authors aggressively promoted it.

In his statement, Moniz's spokesman said the study has "stood the test of time" and emphasized Moniz's support for an Obama-era rule that sought to rein in leaks of methane from oil and gas sites. That regulation has become the latest target of the Trump administration.

The MIT study was cited in a slew of other reports, including one from an Energy Department committee in 2011. Chairing the committee was John Deutch, a former CIA director and then-board member of Cheniere, a Houston-based company that later became the first to export LNG. Another member, author Daniel Yergin, went on to publish several studies in favor of LNG and crude-oil exports as vice chairman of IHS Markit, an industry consultancy. Yergin sat on the advisory board of Moniz's MIT think tank; Moniz was a private consultant for IHS Markit. Deutch did not respond to requests for comment, but a representative of Yergin's noted that IHS Markit is "solely responsible" for the contents of its studies, regardless of funding.

The studies helped buoy the idea of natural gas as an answer to the planet's climate woes, even though early research hinted that methane could derail that narrative. A 2018 study sponsored by the Environmental Defense Fund — a green group that has partnered with the oil and gas industry to investigate leaks of the greenhouse gas — has only furthered doubts. The study found methane emissions were 60 percent higher than previously estimated. "If natural gas is a bridge fuel," said Ramón Alvarez, a co-author and associate chief scientist at EDF, "methane leaks is a major structural fault in the integrity of that bridge."

To meet the lofty targets outlined in the Paris agreement, it is widely accepted that countries must reach "zero emissions" by 2050, which means phasing out fossil fuels or developing technologies that make them climate-neutral. Environmentalists argue the expansive buildout of natural-gas infrastructure ensures the fuel's future for decades, jeopardizing the world's chances of avoiding catastrophic warming.

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'LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD'

During a July press conference in England with British Prime Minister Theresa May, Trump struck an upbeat tone. "We've become an oil exporter, which would not have happened under the past regime or a new regime if it weren't us," he declared.

In fact, America did begin exporting large volumes of crude oil under Obama. He approved a last-minute budget deal to avert a government shutdown in 2015, which also removed restrictions on crude sales for the first time in 40 years. However, the country still imports more crude than it exports — a trend experts believe will continue.

Congress had enacted the restrictions as a conservation measure in 1975 following the Arab Oil Embargo, which caused fuel shortages. Under the ban, companies had to refine crude oil into petroleum products such as gasoline or secure special exemptions from the Commerce Department to sell the resource abroad.

As was the case with LNG, interest in crude exports soared when fracking took off. With oil production climbing steadily in 2012, American Petroleum Institute President Jack Gerard was among the first to suggest the ban be thrown out. Shortly thereafter, crude-oil exports became a priority for the GOP as well as some Democrats in drilling states.

But they became an albatross for the Obama White House. Boosting crude oil — which doesn't have any of LNG's purported climate benefits — would put the administration at odds with its own climate agenda. So, in October 2015, the White House threatened to veto legislation lifting the ban, urging Congress to focus on "supporting our transition to a low-carbon economy."

Senators Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., and Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, responded by mustering congressional support for a provision in that year's budget bill allowing crude-oil exports. By December 2015, the measure was part of a $1.1 trillion spending plan — veto-proof legislation needed to keep the federal government running. In exchange for backing exports, Democrats got five-year extensions on tax credits for wind and solar.

"It didn't strike us as the best deal," said Ana Unruh Cohen, managing director of government affairs for the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group. Cohen was an aide to Senator Edward Markey, D-Mass., when interest in the ban spiked on Capitol Hill. Markey was the deal's most vocal opponent, calling it a "Trojan horse" for "pumping up Big Oil's profits."

Climate change was an afterthought in the debate over the ban, Cohen said. Both sides were fixated on how crude-oil exports would affect energy prices, not greenhouse-gas emissions. And Democrats mistakenly banked on emission-cutting policies such as the Clean Power Plan — one of several Obama-era regulations being tossed out by Trump — to drive investment in renewable energy.

Even though the Obama White House publicly discouraged efforts to undo the ban, it ultimately signed off on the deal. Tyson Slocum, director of Public Citizen's energy program, called it a "pathetic compromise."

On January 4, 2016, ConocoPhillips — one of 16 companies that collaborated to overturn the ban — became the first to export American crude oil. This summer, the U.S. shattered records by exporting 3 million barrels of crude a day, trailing only Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

In a written statement, Heitkamp said crude-oil exports have allowed the U.S. to "level the playing field in the global energy market." Obama representatives did not respond to requests for comment.

Moniz was among the first Obama administration officials to publicly question the ban, at an industry conference in December 2013. In the interview with the Center and Newsy, Moniz said his remarks reflected "proper policy," not energy-industry lobbying.

Barriers to exports already had been eroding behind the scenes. In September 2013, the Commerce Department issued a confidential ruling allowing Houston-based Peaker Energy to export condensate, a barely processed, ultralight oil hard to distinguish from crude. The agency granted approvals to two more companies in March 2014.The rulings — which didn't become public knowledge until months after they were issued — triggered speculation by an energy expert that Commerce was taking a "baby step" toward lifting the ban.

At the same time, a flurry of white papers promised crude-oil exports would not only lower energy prices but also give America an edge over energy titans such as Russia. One study from IHS Markit argued that reversing the ban would resolve a dilemma created by the fracking boom, which had flooded the market with a lighter type of crude that couldn't be easily processed by most U.S. refineries. Co-authored by Yergin, that report was funded by 20 oil and gas companies.

Industry was also marshaling forces to overturn the ban. Producers for American Crude Oil Exports, or PACE, debuted in October 2014 as a coalition of 16 companies dedicated to reversing the "outdated policy in a new era of U.S. energy abundance." At least 14 of these companies were active last year in the Permian Basin, where exports have taken drilling to new heights. The Permian boom is expected to accelerate, worsening air quality and driving up water use in a region prone to drought.

Some of the same PACE companies fund Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy, a think tank founded in 2013 by former Obama energy and climate advisor Jason Bordoff, who has argued in favor of both LNG and crude-oil exports as a way to spur job growth and keep America competitive.

Of the 48 sponsors listed on the center's website, at least 29 have direct ties to the oil and gas industry. The center's board includes current and former executives from ConocoPhillips; Yergin; Chinese oil tycoon Fu Chengyu; and Charif Souki, co-founder of Cheniere and Tellurian. Only a handful of donors appear to be focused on climate change and renewable energy.

The center declined to make Bordoff available for an interview. A Columbia spokesman wrote that the center's work has focused on "how the reduction of fossil fuel use and the growth of clean energy sources are necessary to address the urgent challenge of climate change. The suggestion that some contributions from commercial entities or

any other source have affected the independence of (the center's) policy analysis is false."

Bordoff has been a frequent critic of the Trump administration for its rollbacks of environmental regulations. But he's continued to advocate for LNG exports, aligning himself with free-market diehards like Perry.

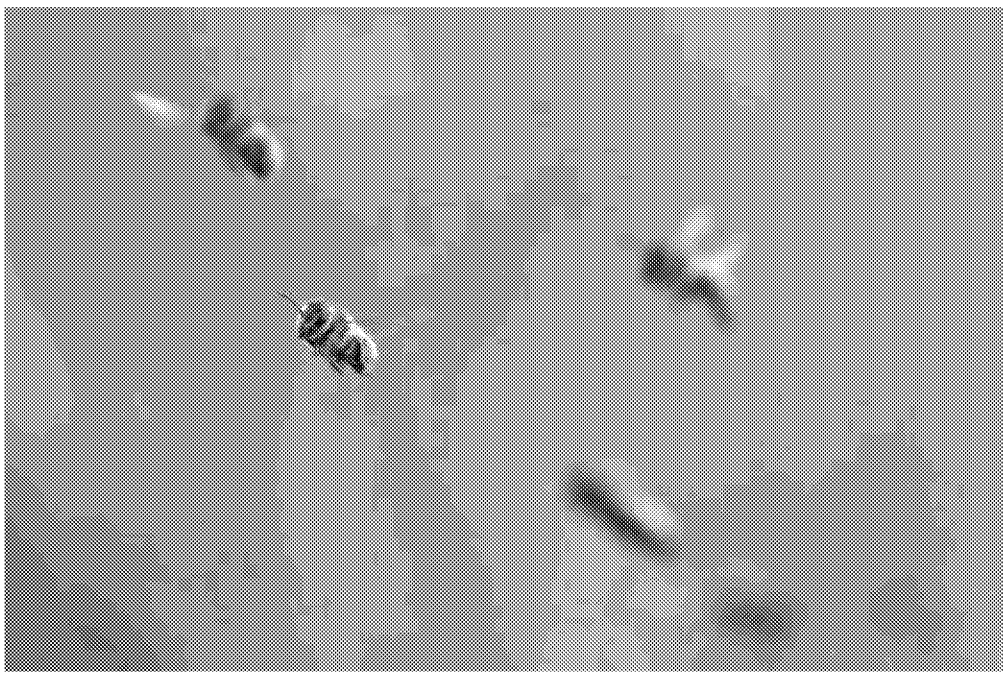
Slocum, of Public Citizen, said Trump administration officials are merely capitalizing on choices made years earlier that breathed new life into "vested fossil-fuel interests."

"That's what folks in the Obama administration never really understood — that the decision they were making has implications for one or two generations," Slocum said. "That's the shortsightedness of this entire hysteria to promote exports."

LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENT AND FLOOD CONTROL

'Hyperalarming' study shows massive insect loss

Updated Oct 15, 2:29 PM;
Posted Oct 15, 2:30 PM



Beekeepers in the U.S. and elsewhere reported an increase in honeybee deaths over the last year, possibly the result of erratic weather patterns brought on by a changing climate. (Bloomberg photo by Daniel Acker)

By The Washington Post

Insects around the world are in a crisis, according to a small but growing number of long-term studies showing dramatic declines in invertebrate populations. A new report suggests that the problem is more widespread than scientists realized. Huge numbers of bugs have been lost in a pristine national forest in Puerto Rico, the study found, and the forest's insect-eating animals have gone missing, too.

In 2014, an international team of biologists estimated that, in the past 35 years, the abundance of invertebrates such as beetles and bees decreased by 45 percent. In places where long-term insect data are available, mainly in Europe, insect numbers are plummeting. A study last year showed a 76 percent decrease in flying insects in the past few decades in German nature preserves.

The latest report, published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, shows that the problem extends to the Americas. The study's authors implicate climate change in the loss of tropical invertebrates.

"This study in PNAS is a real wake-up call - a clarion call - that the phenomenon could be much, much bigger, and across many more ecosystems," said David Wagner, an expert in invertebrate conservation at the University of Connecticut who was not involved with this research. He added: "This is one of the most disturbing articles I have ever read."

Bradford Lister, a biologist at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, has been studying rain forest insects in Puerto Rico since the 1970s. If Puerto Rico is the island of enchantment - "la isla del encanto" - then its rain forest is "the enchanted forest on the enchanted isle," he said. Birds and coqui frogs trill beneath a 50-foot-tall emerald canopy. The forest, named El Yunque, is well-protected. Spanish King Alfonso XII claimed the jungle as a 19th-century royal preserve. Decades later, Theodore Roosevelt made it a national reserve, and El Yunque remains the only tropical rain forest in the National Forest system.

"We went down in '76, '77 expressly to measure the resources: the insects and the insectivores in the rain forest, the birds, the frogs, the lizards," Lister said.

He came back nearly 40 years later, with his colleague Andres Garcia, an ecologist at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. What the scientists did not see on their return troubled them. "Boy, it was immediately obvious

when we went into that forest," Lister said. Fewer birds flitted overhead. The butterflies, once abundant, had all but vanished.

Garcia and Lister once again measured the forest's insects and other invertebrates, a group called arthropods that includes spiders and centipedes. The researchers trapped arthropods on the ground in plates covered in a sticky glue, and raised several more plates about three feet into the canopy. They also swept nets over the brush hundreds of times, collecting the critters that crawled through the vegetation.

Each technique revealed the biomass (the dry weight of all the captured invertebrates) had significantly decreased from 1976 to the present day. The sweep sample biomass decreased to a fourth or an eighth of what it had been. Between January 1977 and January 2013, the catch rate in the sticky ground traps fell 60-fold.

"Everything is dropping," Lister said. The most common invertebrates in the rain forest - the moths, the butterflies, the grasshoppers, the spiders and others - are all far less

abundant.

Louisiana State University entomologist Timothy Schowalter, who is not an author of this recent report, has studied this forest since the 1990s. This research is consistent with his data, as well as the European biomass studies. "It takes these long-term sites, with consistent sampling across a long period of time, to document these trends," he said. "I find their data pretty compelling."

The study authors also trapped anole lizards, which eat arthropods, in the rain forest. They compared these numbers with counts from the 1970s. Anole biomass dropped by more than 30 percent. Some anole species have altogether disappeared from the interior forest.

Insect-eating frogs and birds plummeted, too. Another research team used mist nets to capture birds in 1990, and again in 2005. Captures fell by about 50 percent. Garcia and Lister analyzed the data with an eye on the insectivores. The ruddy quail dove, which eats fruits and seeds, had no population change. A brilliant green bird called the Puerto Rican tody, which eats bugs almost exclusively, vanished by 90 percent.

The food web appears to have been torn asunder from the bottom. It's credible that the authors link the cascade to arthropod loss, Schowalter said, because "you have all these different taxa showing the same trends - the insectivorous birds, frogs and lizards - but you don't see those among seed-feeding birds."

Lister and Garcia attribute this crash to climate. In the same 40-year period as the arthropod crash, the average high temperature in the rain forest increased by 4 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperatures in the tropics stick to a narrow band. The invertebrates that live there, likewise, are adapted to these temperatures and fare poorly outside them; bugs cannot regulate their internal heat.

A recent analysis of climate change and insects, published in August in the journal Science, predicts a decrease in tropical insect populations, according to an author of that study, Scott Merrill, who studies crop pests at the University of Vermont. In temperate regions farther from the equator, where insects can survive a wider range of temperatures, agricultural pests will devour more food as their metabolism increases, Merrill and his co-authors warned. But after a certain thermal threshold, insects will no longer lay eggs, he said, and their internal chemistry breaks down.

The authors of a 2017 study of vanished flying insects in Germany suggested other possible culprits, including pesticides and habitat loss. Arthropods around the globe also have to contend with pathogens and invasive species.

"It's bewildering, and I'm scared to death that it's actually death by a thousand cuts," Wagner said. "One of the scariest parts about it is that we don't have an obvious smoking gun here." A particular danger to these arthropods, in his view, was not temperature but droughts and lack of rainfall.

Lister pointed out that, since 1969, pesticide use has fallen over 80 percent in Puerto Rico. He does not know what else could be to blame. The study authors used a recent analytic method, invented by a professor of economics at Fordham University, to assess the role of heat. "It allows you to place a likelihood on variable X causing variable Y," Lister said. "So we did that and then five out of our six populations we got the strongest possible support for heat causing those decreases in abundance of frogs and insects."

The authors sorted out the effects of weather like hurricanes and still saw a consistent trend, Schowalter said, which makes a convincing case for climate.

"If anything, I think their results and caveats are understated. The gravity of their findings and ramifications for other animals, especially vertebrates, is hyperalarming," Wagner said. But he is not convinced that climate change is the global driver of insect loss. "The decline of insects in northern Europe precedes that of climate change there," he said. "Likewise, in New England, some tangible declines began in the 1950s."

No matter the cause, all of the scientists agreed that more people should pay attention to the bugpocalypse.

"It's a very scary thing," Merill said, that comes on the heels of a "gloomy, gloomy" U.N. report that estimated the world has a decade left to wrangle climate change under control. But "we can all step up," he said, by using more fuel-efficient cars and turning off unused electronics. The Portland, Oregon-based Xerces Society, a nonprofit environmental group that promotes insect conservation, recommends planting a garden with native plants that flower throughout the year.

"Unfortunately we have deaf ears in Washington," Schowalter said. But those ears will listen at some point, he said, because our food supply will be in jeopardy.

Thirty-five percent of the world's plant crops requires pollination by bees, wasps and other animals. And arthropods are more than just pollinators. They're the planet's wee custodians, toiling away in unnoticed or avoided corners. They chew up rotting wood and eat carrion. "And none of us want to have more carcasses around," Schowalter said. Wild insects provide $57 billion worth of six-legged labor in the United States each year, according to a 2006 estimate.

The loss of insects and arthropods could further rend the rain forest's food web, Lister warned, causing plant species to go extinct without pollinators. "If the tropical forests go it will be yet another catastrophic failure of the whole Earth system," he said, "that will feed back on human beings in an almost unimaginable way."

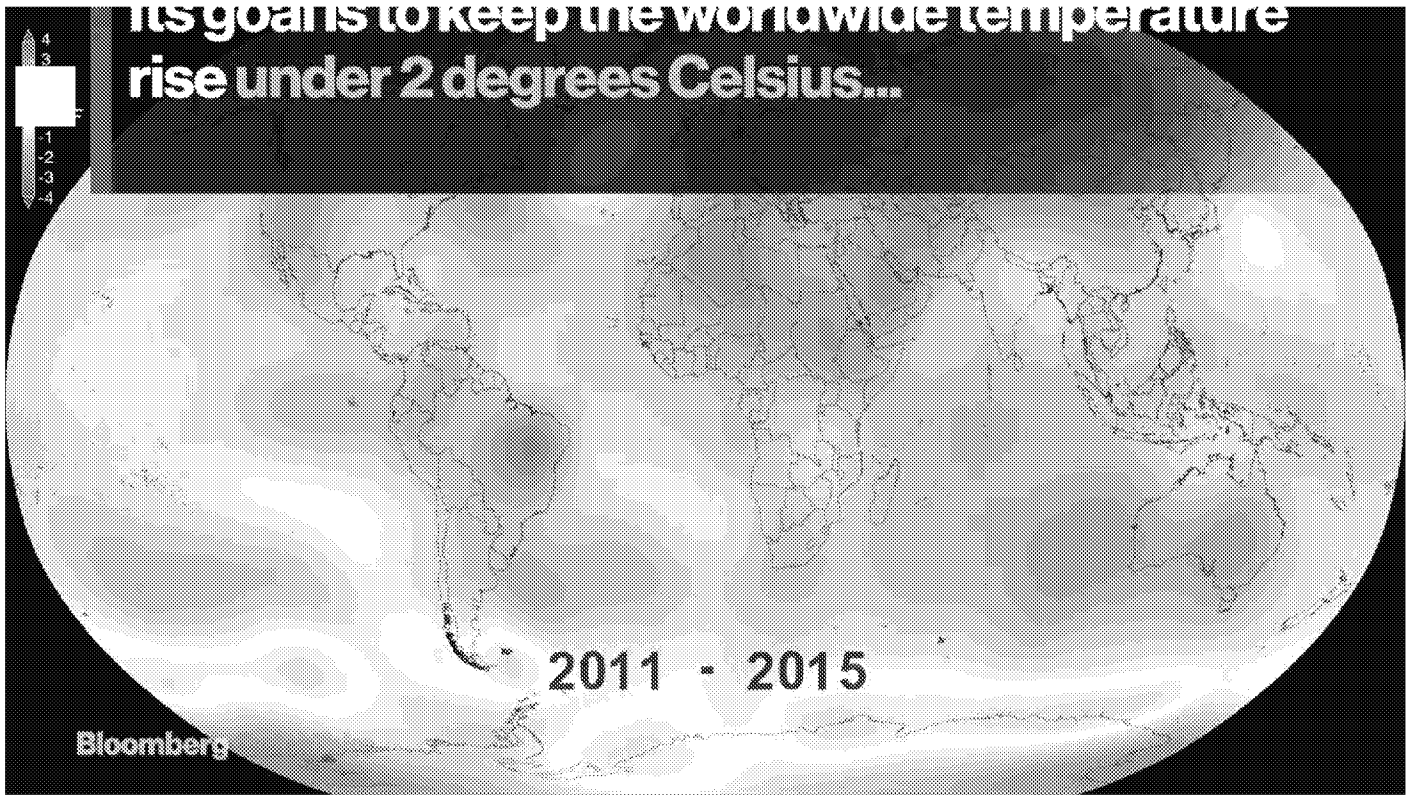
Author Information:

Climate Changed

Scientists to Trump: 'Zero Reason' to Expect a Climate Reversal

By Jennifer A Dlouhy
October 15, 2018, 11:27 AM GMT-6

- Trump acknowledges 'something's happening' with warming
- President doesn't want to put U.S. at disadvantage on issue



Donald Trump may not think climate change is a "hoax" anymore, but the president made clear he still doubts whether humans are driving the phenomenon and thinks the whole thing could reverse itself.

Trump reiterated his doubts on climate change during an interview with "60 Minutes" on CBS, even as he distanced himself from a past tweet asserting that global warming is a "hoax" perpetrated by the Chinese. Trump also used the interview to suggest scientists with "a very big political agenda" have fanned concerns about the phenomenon.

"I don't think it's a hoax. I think there's probably a difference, but I don't know that it's man-made," Trump said. "I'm not denying climate change. But it could very well go back."

The president's remarks aired one week after the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a dire report warning that countries must take "unprecedented" action over the next 12 years to keep global warming in check and prevent a cascade of catastrophic consequences, from devastating droughts and savage storms to rising seas.

Read: Exxon Puts $1 Million Into Quest for Carbon Tax and Rebate

Trump's comments contradict research about the way carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping greenhouse gases behave in the atmosphere. Global temperatures have already risen 1 degree Celsius since the industrial revolution. And scientists broadly agree that greenhouse gas emissions, including those released when oil and coal are burned to generate electricity, are the primary cause of global warming.

"There really is no serious scientific disagreement that if you put massive amounts of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere and you increase concentration, that traps heat," said Kate Marvel, an associate research scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies. "There really is no dispute on that."

Trump's suggestion that the climate will snap back marks an evolution of his views on the issue. He previously told the New York Times in January that "there is a cooling and there is a heating."

Now, he appears to be confidently forecasting a reversal of climate change.

"I think something's happening," Trump told CBS journalist Lesley Stahl. "Something's changing and it'll change back again."

Trump delivered his analysis without offering additional scientific support for his views. White House officials did not respond to emailed requests for comment Monday.

Scientists draw a distinction between big shifts in the world's climate stretching over millennia and the recent rapid warming trend. According to U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data, there hasn't been a cooler-than-average year since 1976. Instead, it's been hotter than average every year -- all 41 of them -- since.

Related: Climate Crisis Spurs UN Call for $2.4 Trillion Fossil Fuel Shift

And the Earth keeps setting temperature records -- 2014 was the hottest year for surface temperature, according to NOAA, until 2015, which was even hotter. Then 2016 topped even that. (2017 was the third-hottest year, after 2016 and 2015, NOAA says).

"The odds of that happening by chance are just statistically infinitesimal," said Noah Diffenbaugh, a professor and senior fellow at Stanford University. "We also know that warming is not consistent with volcanoes or solar cycles or these non-human sources."

The existence of past cool periods -- including the Ice Age -- aren't evidence the current warming trend is illusory, scientists say. They help support it. Some of the strongest evidence and understanding of what causes Earth's climate to change come from studies documenting conditions before humans showed up, Diffenbaugh said.

Ice Age

Andrew Dessler, a climate scientist at Texas A&M University, said it's unclear what Trump meant in asserting the climate can "go back."

"Given the scientific community's view that the warming is driven by greenhouse gases, there's zero reason to think that climate change will reverse itself," Dessler said.

In the CBS interview, the president reiterated his view that he's not willing to risk American jobs or the U.S. economy to confront climate change -- even if "something's happening."

"I don't want to give trillions and trillions of dollars," Trump said. "I don't want to lose millions and millions of jobs. I don't want to be put at a disadvantage."

That's in keeping with Trump's June 2017 decision to pull the U.S. out of the landmark Paris climate accord, based on an argument that living up to the pact's carbon-cutting commitments would punish America and deal a devastating cost to the economy. Under Trump, federal agencies also are easing a slew of Obama-era regulations designed to cut greenhouse gas emissions from oil wells, automobiles and power plants.

Read: Trump Nominees Accept Global Warming -- But Only to a Degree

Trump has long questioned climate change, declaring in one November 2012 tweet that the entire "concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive."

Although Trump told "60 Minutes" that "something's changing," he later added: "You don't know whether or not that would have happened with or without man. You don't know."

Michael E. Mann, a scientist at Pennsylvania State University, calls that "one of the standard 'stages of denial"' on climate.

"The first stage is 'it's not happening,' The second stage of denial, where Trump is currently located, is 'it's not human-caused,"' Mann said. "In reality, there is an overwhelming scientific consensus that the warming we have seen over the past century can only be explained by human-caused climate change and in particular the burning of fossil fuels, something that Trump's key supporters and funders profit from directly."

Trump's latest assertions dovetail with the careful refrain many of his top officials have adopted on climate change: acknowledging the climate is or may be changing, but questioning how much of it is caused by humans.

The posture, adopted by former EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Energy Secretary Rick Perry, may undercut accusations from environmental groups that they are "climate deniers." The careful rhetorical formulation also provides room for administration officials to acknowledge climate change without pursuing policies to curb the use of fossil fuels that is driving the phenomenon.

– With assistance by Eric Roston

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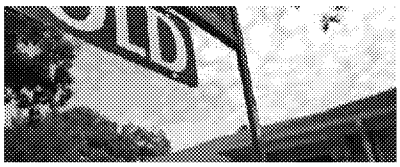
ENVIRONMENT 2 HRS AGO

How Dallas fared against suburbs like Plano, Arlington in a ranking of America's greenest cities

Jeff Mosier, Energy and Environment Writer

The Dallas-Fort Worth area often tops — or at least performs well — in the flood of financial and quality-of-life lists released every month.

Money ranked Frisco as the "best place to live." Allen was the number two place to launch a career. And the Dallas area was named the best place for jobs last year.



REAL ESTATE

Allen, Frisco, McKinney top list of best U.S. cities for first-time buyers, but who's No. 1?

But cities here and throughout Texas tanked in Wallet Hub's 2018 Greenest Cities in America list.

Among the 100 cities ranked, Dallas finished at 82, several spots below Houston and Fort Worth. Austin led the Lone Star State at 20 followed by El Paso at 40. Corpus Christi brought up the rear at number 99.

The scoring system looked at 26 measures broadly broken down into the categories of Environment, Transportation, Energy Sources and Lifestyle & Policy. Points were assigned based on air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, green space, walk and bike scores, renewable energy use, community gardens and other factors.

Top Texas Cities on Wallet Hub's 2018 Green List

Rank	City, State	Total Score
20	Austin, TX	58.44
40	El Paso, TX	51.55
48	San Antonio, TX	50.77
50	Garland, TX	49.96
56	Lubbock, TX	48.9
64	Plano, TX	47.85
72	Irving, TX	46.31
74	Arlington, TX	45.85
77	Fort Worth, TX	45.16
80	Houston, TX	44.79
82	Dallas, TX	44.46
86	Laredo, TX	43.43
99	Corpus Christi, TX	36.53

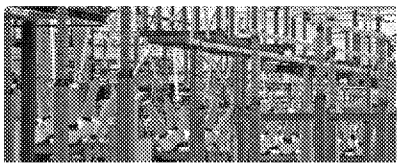
SOURCE: Wallet Hub

In those four categories, Dallas scored best — a middling 54th place — in the Energy Source category. Texas gets about 19 percent of its electricity from wind energy, a number that could surpass coal in the next year or two.

That score was dragged down by an 86th place finish for "Lifestyle & Policy," a category that took into account community gardens, farmers markets, community-supported agriculture, green job opportunities and local programs promoting green energy usage.

Despite it's location in the Gulf Coast's petrochemical corridor, Houston finished two places better than Dallas. Houston also placed better in the Environment category, which includes air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, urban heat island effect, water quality and others.

Fort Worth (77) finished higher than Dallas and Houston but not by much. Like Houston, the Environment category (11 places better) helped Fort Worth pull ahead of Dallas.



ENERGY

How much has Texas dropped its reliance on coal? You'd be surprised

Here are some other notable details about the ranked local cities:

Arlington finished last (100) in the Transportation category. It has long been known as the nation's largest city without mass transit. More recently, city leadership has hoped that autonomous vehicles will help Arlington with its transportation issues.

Garland finished best among North Texas cities. It was 97th in the Lifestyle & Policy category, but a stronger score (27) for Environment pushed Garland higher.

Plano would have ranked higher — certainly higher than Lubbock — if not for its Transportation ranking (92) dragging it down. Despite that low score, Plano is part of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit system.

Irving's rank suffered thanks to its Transportation (97) and Lifestyle & Policy (91) rankings.

The top of the Wallet Hub list was dominated by West Coast cities as well as Washington D.C. and Honolulu. San Diego was number one.

Baton Rouge, La. finished dead last, ranking between 93 and 99 in each category.

The poor showing in the Wallet Hub report wasn't surprising, considering an earlier list. The website ranked the "Greenest States" in April. Texas finished 43rd: not the worst but far from good.

Wallet Hub's 2018 Greenest Cities

Rank	City, State	Total Score
1	San Diego, CA	72.53
2	San Francisco, CA	72.14
3	Washington, DC	70.39
4	Irvine, CA	68.97
5	San Jose, CA	68.69
6	Honolulu, HI	68.41
7	Fremont, CA	67.59
8	Seattle, WA	66.91
9	Sacramento, CA	66.06
10	Portland, OR	65.19

SOURCE: Wallet Hub

Jeff Mosier / DMN

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COURTS

DOJ seeks to limit scientists' testimony at climate trial

Benjamin Hulac, E&E News reporter
Published: Tuesday, October 16, 2018

The federal government is seeking to limit testimony from James Hansen and other prominent climate scientists from an upcoming trial. chesapeakeclimate/Flickr

The Trump administration doesn't want the trial in a landmark lawsuit brought by a group of young Americans to become a climate change symposium.

In court documents yesterday, the government pressed the judge in the case to limit the testimony of James Hansen and five other prominent climate researchers whom plaintiffs have called as expert witnesses.

CONTINUING COVERAGE

CLIMATE IN THE COURTS:

JULIANA v. UNITED STATES

Twenty-one young Americans are suing the government over climate change. Click here to view the continuing coverage.

The administration is seeking to limit the trial's focus on the scientific details of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Hansen, one of the first researchers to raise alarm about global warming, and the other experts each filed reports in the case at the plaintiffs' request.

"The Court should exercise its discretion here by excluding any testimony reflected in the six reports that is cumulative or that relates to matters not in dispute," Jeffrey Wood, an official in the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division, said in a motion. "The testimony should be precluded."

The request came the same day that Judge Ann Aiken of the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon denied the government's latest attempt to halt the trial before it even begins.

Twenty-one children and young adults first brought the lawsuit, *Juliana v. United States*, in 2015 against the Obama administration, alleging that the government has violated what they say is their constitutional right to live in a safe and stable climate.

The Trump administration is aiming to bar the climate scientists from testifying about scientific information the government has accepted as fact, according to both the federal defendants and the plaintiffs.

"This is not an attempt to preclude their testimony in its entirety," Andrea Rodgers, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, said through a spokeswoman. "This is very narrow in scope, and we will be responding to their motion the end of the week."

It is the latest indication that the government does not plan to challenge the plaintiffs on the science of climate change at the trial beginning Oct. 29 and instead will focus on legal arguments of standing to undermine their

claims (***Climatewire***, Oct. 12).

And although the plaintiffs plan to call expert witnesses to detail the science, effects and causes of climate change, government lawyers are unlikely to clash with them over climate science.

In other words, the trial likely won't be a "tutorial" on climate science such as the one a federal judge in California ordered earlier this year in litigation brought by cities against oil companies over alleged climate damages.

The government, in fact, admitted in January 2017 in *Juliana* that it agreed with the fundamentals of climate science.

In a little-noticed court document that month, the government acknowledged that the United States has been an outsize force in man-made climate change.

The country bears a significant responsibility for climate change, DOJ lawyers said then, acknowledging that the country emitted more than 25 percent of global carbon dioxide between 1850 and 2012 (***Climatewire***, Jan. 18, 2017).

Along with Hansen, the experts that the government is seeking to limit are: Steven Running, formerly of the University of Montana; Kevin Trenberth, a climate analyst at the National Center for Atmospheric Research; Eric Rignot, a glaciologist at the University of California, Irvine; Harold Wanless, a sea-level rise expert at the University of Miami; and Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, director of the Global Change Institute at the University of Queensland.

In the court document, Wood said that the government accepts as fact that climate change is lowering snowpack levels and increasing sea levels, and that it is supporting "adverse" effects on "storms and hurricanes, wildfires, drought, floods" and other weather events.

The government also revealed its witness list yesterday.

Beyond two medical doctors who have challenged the links between public health and climate change, the list includes several university professors who have worked on U.N. climate reports (***Climatewire***, Oct. 15).

It also includes 13 government officials who, if called to the stand, will testify about the authenticity of federal government records on climate change, according to the Department of Justice.

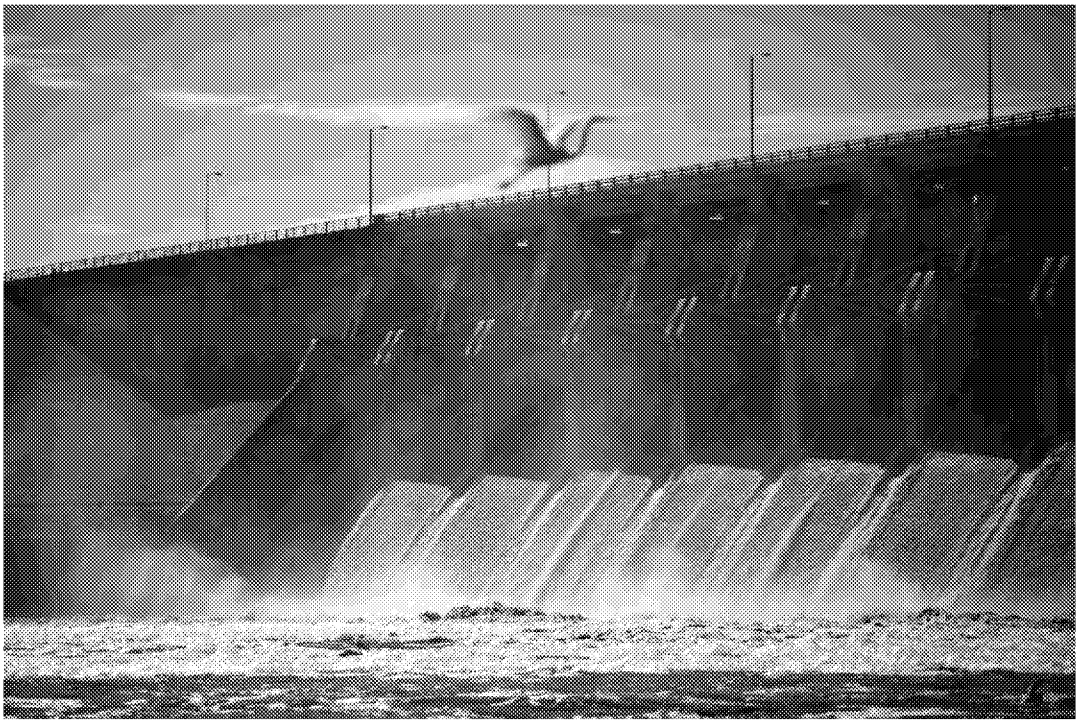
Twitter: @benhulac | Email: bhulac@eenews.net

https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/high-and-dry-drought-persists-while-rivers-flow-high-with/article_65f190f7-c4e0-54b9-94be-b2e1aa518a72.html

EDITOR'S PICK

High and dry: Drought persists while rivers flow high with waters from the West, Kansas

By Kelly Bostian Tulsa World 9 hrs ago



Water pours from Keystone Dam on Monday. JOHN CLANTON/Tulsa World

It's almost a cruel joke. As water builds up in Keystone and Oologah lakes, and flows high in the Arkansas and Verdigris rivers, much of the land surrounding those waterways remains in moderate to severe drought conditions.

Oklahoma Mesonet's Drought Monitor map shows parts of northern Tulsa, southern Osage and Washington and Rogers counties remain in drought status this week while the rivers run high and water levels rose 7 and 15 feet, respectively, in Oologah and Keystone in the five days between Oct. 10 and 15.

The full lakes and the high flows come thanks to heavy rains last week across western Oklahoma and southern Kansas from Dodge City east, according to James Paul, hydrologist with the National Weather Service River Forecast Center at Tulsa. Areas from Woodward to north of Wichita had 8 to 10 inches of rain last week.

"Pretty much all of southern Kansas east of Dodge City had at least 5 to 8 inches of rain," he said. "We had major flooding on the Arkansas River just northwest of Wichita, almost a record flood in Haven, Kansas ... All of that is working its way this way."

"They got hammered out west last week," Gary McManus, climatologist with the Oklahoma Climatological Survey. Even the abnormally dry Southwest had a big, welcome hit with water now filling Lake Texoma.

"It all stopped when it got to that northern Tulsa and Washington and Osage area, that's still our last big problem area in the state," McManus said.

Eastern Oklahoma and western Arkansas, in the Illinois River Drainage, also remains abnormally dry.

Parts of the drought area received 1 to 1½ inches in the past 10 days but that was not nearly enough to make a dent, McManus said.

"Pawnee on the far west edge of that area got 1½ inches and 20 miles to the west Redrock had over 6 inches, that's how big the gradient is over that small area," he said.

Skiatook residents David and Becky John said they're watching their pond go dry. Migrating great white egrets stopped by to feast on what fish still survived for a few days last week. "The first 12 years we lived here that pond never dried up and the past eight it's dried up three times," David John said.

He shared a screen-grab shot of weather radar as the systems passed. "We're in the middle of the doughnut getting nothing," David John said. "It's been really weird up here."

It will take more than a day or two of rain to help the Osage County area recover, McManus said.

"Some of these parts of the state, in Osage and to the northeast, have pretty big deficits if you look back to the beginning of the year," he said. "That area centered on southern Osage is close to 13 inches below normal so it will need more rains scattered over a longer period of time to recover."

Meanwhile the Kaw, Keystone, Oologah, Grand and Eufaula reservoirs all were rising to some degree Monday with watersheds that include tens of thousands of square miles of rivers and creeks across western Oklahoma and southern Kansas.

Kaw, taking in water from the Arkansas River through Kansas, was 16 feet above normal level Monday and starting to drop, just slightly, with 40,000 cubic feet per second releases, slightly higher than 37,000 cfs inflow. Keystone, at 15 feet above normal, was taking in waters of the Arkansas and Cimarron rivers at about 56,000 cfs and releasing 46,000 cfs toward Tulsa.

A deep spot in Oklahoma last week was the Chikaskia River near Blackwell, according to Paul. It hit 33.5 feet deep on Oct. 9, almost 5 feet above flood stage. It was a little less than 2 feet below it's all-time high of 35.36, set in September 2008.

"It's not uncommon to see it that high there, but it's been a while and it's not usually at this time of year," he said.

While lakes and rivers are up, they will soon crest and start dropping, according to Brannen Parrish, spokesman for Tulsa District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"Based on the current situation, there is plenty of room in the Arkansas River channel to allow us to release what we need to release," he said.

The John Redman Reservoir in Kansas may push water levels up slightly in the Neosho/Grand River system including Grand, Hudson and Fort Gibson lakes. Oologah Lake may rise a little more, and Lake Eufaula, taking in waters from the Canadian River, also may rise slightly while Kaw and Keystone run at higher levels, but reservoir release plans are updated regularly, Parrish said.

"It is a little more flow than we're used to seeing this time of year but we're making good progress and things will get back down closer to normal pretty soon, assuming we have five or more days of dry weather coming," he said.

Oklahoma Lake Levels

Lake levels and trends midnight to 4 p.m. Monday, Oct. 15.

Kaw: 16.16 feet above normal, dropping slightly

Keystone: 15.57 above, steady

Skiatook: 4.82 feet below, steady

Oologah: 7.41 above, rising slightly

Grand: 3.53 above, rising slightly

Hudson: 1.04 above, steady

Fort Gibson: 3.92 above, rising slightly

Eufaula: 3.20 above, rising

Tenkiller: 3.51 below, falling slightly

Texoma: 9.80 above, steady

Staff Writer Kelly Bostian